

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6385

As Passed House:
February 28, 2012

Title: An act relating to extending the habitat and recreation lands coordinating group until July 31, 2017.

Brief Description: Extending the tenure of the habitat and recreation lands coordinating group.

Sponsors: Senators Parlette, Fraser, Morton, Ranker and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 2/17/12, 2/21/12 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/28/12, 95-3.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Extends the expiration date of the authority that created the Habitat and Recreational Land Coordinating Group (Lands Group) from July 31, 2012, until July 31, 2017.
- Provides direction on how the Lands Group should prioritize its duties in the face of limited resources.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; Stanford, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Wilcox, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buys, Dunshee, Finn, Hinkle, Kretz, Lytton, Orcutt, Pettigrew and Van De Wege.

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) administers a number of grant and policy programs relating to natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation. These programs

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include: the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board; the Salmon Recovery Funding Board; the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office; the Invasive Species Council; and the Habitat and Recreational Land Coordinating Group (Lands Group).

In 2007 the Legislature established the Lands Group consisting of representatives of the RCO, the State Parks and Recreation Commission, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Lands Group also includes participation by representatives of appropriate stakeholder groups invited to participate by the Director of the RCO.

The Lands Group has been assigned specific statutory duties. These include:

- reviewing agency land acquisition and disposal plans to help ensure statewide coordination;
- producing a forecast of land acquisition and disposal plans;
- convening an annual forum for agencies to coordinate near term acquisition and disposal plans;
- developing recommendations for geographic information systems mapping and acquisition and disposal recordkeeping; and
- developing an approach for monitoring the success of acquisitions.

The Lands Group is set to expire July 31, 2012.

Summary of Bill:

The expiration date of authority that created the the Habitat and Recreational Land Coordinating Group (Lands Group) is extended from July 31, 2012, until July 31, 2017. In addition, the Lands Group is directed to prioritize specified activities if it does not have the resources to fulfill all of its statutory duties.

The state agencies that participate in the Lands Group are directed to do so within existing resources.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The Habitat and Recreational Land Coordinating Group (Lands Group) provides a forum so that all stakeholders can better understand state land acquisition strategies and it is a good example of interagency coordination. The Lands Group has helped solve a problem with local governments feeling surprised by state agency land acquisitions.

(Neutral) Although a continuation of the Lands Group was not in the Governor's budget, the Recreation and Conservation Office stands ready to implement the legislation and continue to provide transparency in state land acquisitions.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Bill Clarke, Trust for Public Land; Cullen Stephenson, Department of Natural Resources; Bill Robinson, The Nature Conservancy; and Tom Bugert, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition.

(Neutral) Kaleen Cottingham, Recreation and Conservation Office.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.